

## Statement of Betty Byrd

My name is Betty Byrd. I am 70 years old and I have lived in Berkeley County, West Virginia since 1975. During my life, I was employed primarily in secretarial positions. I retired from the workforce and then I started receiving Social Security benefits in 1992. I worked 15 years contributing to the Social Security Fund. Additionally, a majority of the benefits that are paid to me result from my deceased husband's contribution to Social Security from when he was employed.

In 1996, Greg Gamble and the Aurora Foundation were referred to me with the understanding that they were approved to be Representative Payees to handle my Social Security benefits. I needed a Representative Payee because I was hospitalized over one hundred miles from my home. After I was hospitalized, I was then placed in an assisted-living facility. Mr. Gamble and Aurora still acted as Payee for my Social Security benefits. When he received my Social Security payments, he was required to pay my electric bill, my phone bill, my lot rent for my trailer, my medical expenses, and my prescription bills.

In 1998, Mr. Gamble stopped paying my lot rent. As a result I was forced to sell my trailer to satisfy the rent arrearages. He also stopped paying the utility bills for my trailer and the power was turned off.

In 1999, I heard from my care facility that Mr. Gamble was several months behind in making my nursing home payments. The facility threatened to evict me for non-payment. Not only was I going to be homeless as a result of the Payee's action, I was also placed at medical risk because Mr. Gamble did not pay for my medications and, of course, I could not get medications if I wasn't paying for them.

As a result of the action of Social Security not monitoring Mr. Gamble, I was left almost homeless, without medical care and in serious financial trouble.

If it wasn't for the generous people in our community, I probably would not be alive today.